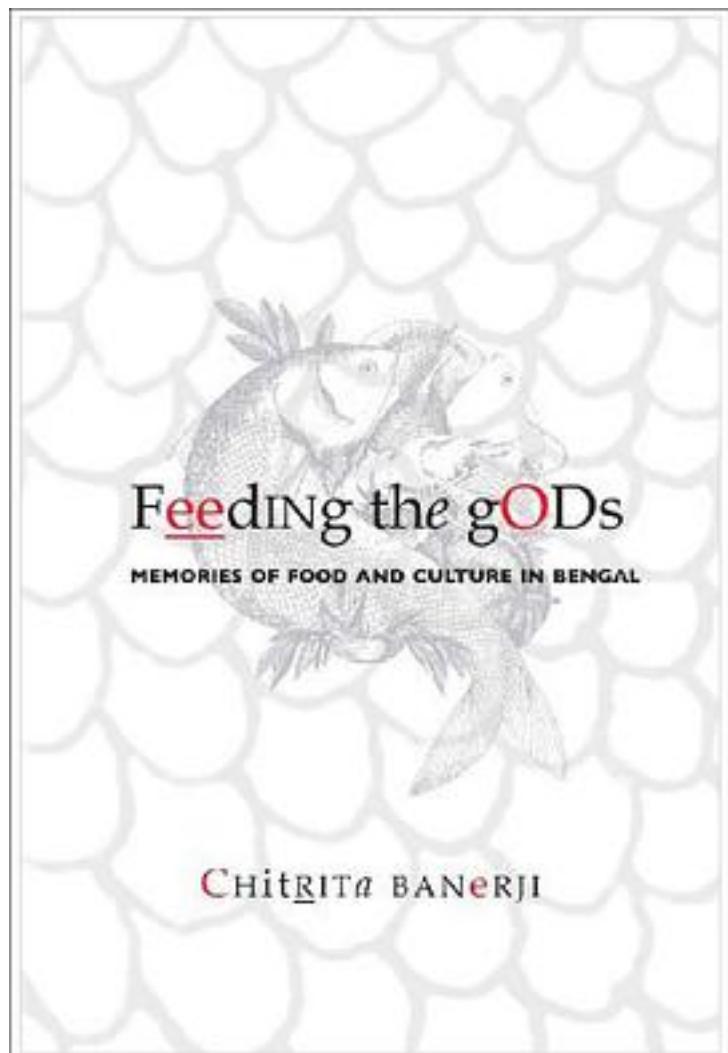


Feeding the Gods



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As the pungent fragrance of spices transports the author back into memories of childhood, we too are plunged headlong into the rich tastes, textures and colours of food in her native Bengal. Here, food is a ritualised and intrinsic part of the culture, particularly of the culture of women's lives. Beyond the meals prepared and cooked for everyday life, food offerings blessed by the gods are shared by devotees in daily ceremonies of worship, special dishes are cooked on auspicious days, and ritual ways of preparing foods are carefully mastered. "Feeding the Gods" paints an extraordinary picture of food and ritual in Bengal. These complex rituals reveal not only an astonishingly rich culinary culture but also a social structure in which certain foods are forbidden. Combining social critique with the intimacy of memoir, Banerji writes of growing up from girlhood to womanhood in Bengal, a land where food and ritual are intimate experiences which shape day-to-day life.

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